

U.S.-México Border 2012 Waste Policy Forum Meeting

February 8, 2006 - Private Meeting

Fiesta Inn Monterrey Centro
Avenida Pino Suarez 1001
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Meeting Summary Contents

Overview on Institutional, Infrastructure, Capacity Building Activities	1
Scrap Tire Strategy	2
Seeking Funding through BECC/NADBank	2
Presentation on the Recovery of Laguna la Escondida.....	3
Scrap Tire Ad Hoc Task Force	4
Next Steps for Implementation of the Binational Action Plan	4
Binational Policy on Site Clean-Up and Revitalization	4
Consultative Mechanism	5
Consensus on Draft Border 2012 Waste Indicators	5
Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) Waste Projects	6
Planning for the Waste Session at the National Coordinator's Meeting	6
Closing Remarks	7
Attendees	7

NOTE

This meeting summary is a record of the Waste Policy Forum (WPF) Private Session which was held in Monterrey, México on February 8, 2006. The meeting notes for the Public Session that happened the previous day are in a different document. PowerPoint presentations made during the Waste Policy Forum can be found online at:
<http://www.epa.gov/border2012/wasteforum.htm>.

OVERVIEW ON INSTITUTIONAL, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

A general discussion on future goals took place. Emily Pimentel of EPA Region 9 asked how the forum defines success of infrastructure capacity building. For example, is success each border state having a hazardous waste facility? Alfonso Flores of SEMARNAT said that each area has its own needs and thus different areas should have their own strategy. One waste stream that he thinks will be of growing concern for many

areas is electronic waste. John Rothman of EPA Region 9 said that the waste forum should communicate with the enforcement forum as the enforcement forum defines its own priorities. It would be useful for the two forums to have related goals.

SCRAP TIRE STRATEGY

Rick Picardi of the EPA went over the Scrap Tire Strategy document, in particular the proposed actions to implement the strategy. These actions include information gathering on scrap tire generation, encouraging the development of innovative end markets, seeking funding to prevent tire piles, and establishing partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders.

The forum discussed the leveraging of a fee to support tire pile clean-up. Mr. Flores agreed that a fee should be implemented but that there needs to be a local mechanism for a fee or tax or projects will not get completed. This evolved into a discussion about how to create community specific strategies as different areas have different needs. Adriana Oropeza of SEMARNAT felt that the technology to deal with tire piles has been sufficiently described and now the forum needs to focus on how communities will apply these technologies. Along these lines, Martin Bremer of ITESM said that a list of all these technologies should be created to bring to different communities so they know what their options are and can pick the solutions most useful for their community. Jose Ignacio Legarreta of SEMARNAT disagreed slightly saying the thrust of the forum's work should be on developing a legal framework to create long-term solutions. The framework should include regulations for waste generation, uses, and end destination. He argued that without legislation, waste tire approaches are simply putting on a band aid but not actually solving the problem. Mr. Flores replied that in 2003 SEMARNAT put out a mandate to all the States to create or adjust their legal framework for waste management. At this point, Nuevo Leon is the first state to comply.

SEEKING FUNDING THROUGH BECC/NADBANK

Daniel Chacon of BECC presented information on the solid waste projects BECC has certified and those that are in the pipeline. He said that BECC has a growing interest in solid waste issues. BECC's goal for 2006 is to identify and develop four waste projects such as increasing recycling or certify workers at solid waste landfills. There are currently 13 certified solid waste projects, 9 in México and 4 in the U.S. for a total investment of \$39.86 million pesos. The largest project is in Matamoros with a \$13 million peso investment. BECC has also granted \$2,621,500 pesos to the border region for solid waste technical assistance. BECC has 16 projects of all types in the pipeline (13 in México and 3 in the U.S.) worth a total of \$68.1 million dollars.

Mr. Chacon also spoke about the size of the populations without waste management services south of the border. People living within the first 100 km have the least access to waste management services. 2.5 million people are without services in this region, as compared to 839 thousand people in the 100-200 km zone and 456 thousand in the 200-300 km zone.

Discussion Highlights

- Ed Ranger of AZDEQ spoke of his state's problem with migrant trash left at the border. Each migrant that crosses the border leaves an estimated 8 pounds of trash behind.
- Ms. Pimentel said that it is a good idea to create community or municipal level projects as thus far most projects have been at the federal or state level. Gina Weber of EPA Region 6 added not to forget the U.S. tribes when considering project recipients.
- David Jones of Region 9 requested the names of the specific projects.
- Jorge Castillo recommended that the BECC coordinate with the council of governments (COGs) as they move forward with improving solid waste management along the border because the COGs themselves are required to develop regional solid waste management plans. He also recommended that BECC revisit several Border 2012 RFPs submitted to EPA by the previous BECC administration. The Request for Proposals included regional solid waste management and an inventory of contaminated sites in El Paso and Cd. Juárez. Mr. Castillo also recommended that the BECC maintain flexibility to ensure that basic waste tire elements are not inadvertently left out of solid waste projects such as new landfills going through the certification process (for example, Matamoros recently certified for a multi-million dollar landfill project which does not include a storage area for scrap tires). Mr. Castillo also inquired about future funding of BECC's technical assistance program.

Mr. Picardi agreed to hold a conference call to continue the discussion of finding strategies. Mr. Chacon concluded the discussion by saying a next step is to create a prioritization scale similar as to what was done for wastewater. He asked the forum to help contribute to the prioritization.

PRESENTATION ON THE RECOVERY OF THE LAGUNA LA ESCONDIDA

The SEMARNAT Delegado for the State of Tamaulipas, Ramon Sampoyo, assisted by Laurencio Lerma of the Municipio Reynosa presented a slideshow on the progress of the clean-up of the Laguna la Escondida, a wetlands area. The lagoon used to be a site for aquatic migratory birds and was home to many other bird species, but it has deteriorated due to loss of land, garbage left by people, and oil discharges from PEMEX. Discarded tires have created water oxidation pools and the site now presents an infectious disease risk. Reynosa Municipality decided to clean-up the ecosystem, remove accumulated sludge, and improve the real estate of the area. In April 2005, a decision by H. Cabildo was made to resuscitate the lagoon. They are now in Phase I, a general clean-up of surface waste. The project is a partnership with many different stakeholders including several universities, government at the local and federal levels, industries, and non-profits.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Mr. Castillo suggested that the municipality apply for the PAHO grants because the Laguna project is health-related and offered Texas's help should the municipality/state need it.

SCRAP TIRE AD HOC TASK FORCE

Mr. Picardi informed the forum of the EPA's Resource Conservation Challenge (RCC) Tire Workgroup. The workgroup is composed of several committees focused on topics such as civil engineering applications and tire derived fuel. The workgroup has historically focused on domestic waste tire issues, but is now interested in participating in the border waste tire work. Mr. Picardi suggested that one of the best way for the Border 2012 Waste Policy Forum to get involved in the RCC tire workgroup would be for the Border 2012 task force co-chairs to nominate people to join the RCC scrap tire committees.

Discussion Highlights

- Mr. Castillo said the best support the task forces could receive from the RCC committees is translated versions of the RCC tire workgroup's publications. For example, Mexicans have many questions on pyrolysis.
- Mr. Bremer commented that Mexican companies could create a good synergy with the tire workgroup. The RCC group has knowledge about the technology needed to deal with scrap tire issues and Mexican companies can provide locations of where to apply the technology.

NEXT STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BINATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON CAPACITY BUILDING

The main discussion that took place was on whether the description of actions should be more specific than they are in the current document. Some people felt that if the action descriptions are not specific, they are less likely to get done. A list of specific actions would focus the work. Others felt that the list of actions should be kept general to allow flexibility as goals and funding may shift during the remaining six years of the Border 2012 timeline. It was finally decided to keep the plan somewhat general but develop specific action plans for selected capacity building projects. It was recommended to add a link in the strategy (when posted online) that will lead to a page of the specific actions being carried out. This will allow people to see exactly what the Border 2012 waste program is doing on capacity building at the time, but also preserve flexibility as conditions change.

BINATIONAL POLICY ON SITE CLEAN-UP AND REVITALIZATION

Mr. Bremer discussed the difficulties of involving the Mexican public on site clean-ups who do not trust the motives of businesses, universities or the government. He said the mechanisms of public involvement are different in México than in the U.S.

Mr. Picardi wanted to determine what the next steps are. He suggested developing a subplan to prioritize which actions to take. Mr. Jones suggested doing this at an upcoming meeting in San Diego. Mr. Flores asked to have another week to look over the document because Mexican law regarding site clean-up and revitalization has recently

changed. The order of action under Mexican law is different from the order of action under the U.S. Superfund program.

CONSULTATIVE MECHANISM ON HAZARDOUS WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES

Mr. Ranger began the discussion by emphasizing the need to use the consultative mechanism when a new hazardous waste treatment plant is being sited. He pointed out that it would be a good idea for Mexican companies to involve American stakeholders because they will be interested in learning about an upcoming site. Mr. Flores told Mr. Ranger he would send him the environmental effect document of the plant recently sited in Sonora, México. He agreed that it is important to use the consultative mechanism so that States on either side of the border can install any necessary infrastructure. Mr. Jones reminded the Forum that the consultative mechanism does not automatically require sharing detailed information on new plants such as the environmental effects. Ms. Pimentel added that it is up to the country that is notified of a new plant siting to request by letter any desired additional information.

CONSENSUS ON DRAFT BORDER 2012 WASTE INDICATORS

Mr. Picardi presented a proposal for environmental indicators under the Border 2012 goal “Reduce land contamination.” These include indicators such as the number of solid waste landfills with permits in the border area, the percent cleanup at the three selected tire piles, and the percent of area at the four selected contaminated sites ready for reuse.

A long discussion ensued over the indicator “percent of transboundary hazardous waste movements that are safely recycled/disposed/treated.” Mr. Rothman asked if this is supposed to be a measurement of the percentage of transboundary waste movements that are tracked. The participants discussed the scope of this indicator and agreed that basically the idea would be to show what percentage of the tracked waste have cradle to grave management.

Mr. Flores felt that this indicator should be in terms of the tracking system and that any change to the indicator that would involve compliance would need to be proposed to Mexican law enforcement. He said that the Mexican information office would not have the capacity to investigate statistics that are not easily pulled up via the electronic tracking system.

The next indicator discussed in detail was the “number of waste separation and recycling programs in the border area.” Mr. Jones suggested rewording this to the more countable indicator “How many municipalities have recycling programs?”

The forum was in agreement that they liked the indicators under Objective 3, about waste tires.

Mr. Picardi told the Forum he will revise the indicators and send out the new document to the Forum.

PRESENTATION ON THE COMMISSION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION (CEC) WASTE PROJECTS

Tim Whitehouse of the CEC presented a slideshow introducing the CEC to those who were unfamiliar with the organization and explained their waste projects. The CEC was set up under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Their work is focused on three pillars: information for decision making, capacity building, and trade and environment. Contrary to initial hopes and fears, the CEC has found that the impact of trade upon the environment has brought about neither the dire environmental effects nor the predicted improvements. Mr. Whitehouse presented three of the CEC's current hazardous waste projects:

- Environmentally-sound management of spent lead acid batteries
- Opportunities to improve the tracking of hazardous waste
- Assisting in the development of compliance assistance efforts

The tracking project has resulted in a 2005 report called "Crossing the Border" which describes the process of transboundary hazardous waste shipments in intricate step by step details. Ideas to focus on for the future include data standards, compliance assistance, or on-line training.

At the end of the presentation, Mr. Castillo asked Mr. Whitehouse how the projects are identified. Mr. Whitehouse said that the Secretariat makes project proposals to the parties, i.e. the three North American countries, who make the final determination of which projects to pursue.

PLANNING FOR THE WASTE SESSION AT BORDER 2012 NATIONAL COORDINATOR'S MEETING (NCM)

Ms. Weber explained how the NCM will be set-up. There will be three 2.5 hour sessions for the border-wide groups, with two groups meeting during each session: homeland security and water, health and waste, enforcement and air. Mr. Picardi volunteered to develop an agenda for the waste session which the forum can discuss during a conference call before the NCM.

CLOSING REMARKS

Mr. Flores said that México needs to do an interior analysis with regards to the country's need for institutional capacity. The tracking needs will be better defined after the upcoming CEC meeting in Merida. Finally, Mr. Flores commented that the focus of the cleanup of contaminated sites has been in the Western region and that he hopes to find a good site on the Eastern side of the border as well. Mr. Hale said next steps include finishing the scrap tire strategy and tire pile inventory. He also said that a priority for the forum is to seek funding to continue the pace of the progress made in the past year.

ATTENDEES (31)

Ed Ranger	Arizona DEQ
Daniel Chacon	BECC/COCEF
Tim Whitehouse	CEC
Hector Chavez	City of Eagle Pass
Martin Bremer	ITESM
Rodrigo Costellon	ITESM (EGADE)
Francisco Garzomtz	ITSM (EGADE)
Hector Ramirez Leal	Junta de Aguas y Drenaje de la Ciudad de Matamoros
Greg Baker	New Mexico Environment Dept.
Adriana Oropeza	SEMARNAT
Alfonso Flores Naminez	SEMARNAT
Hector M. Sánchez Lopez	SEMARNAT
Mauro Corral	SEMARNAT
Oscar Aragón	SEMARNAT
Israel Camacho	SEMARNAT- BC
Norma Rangel Seulla	SEMARNAT- NL
Miguel Angel Torres	SEMARNAT- Tamaulipas
Ramón Antonio Sampayo	SEMARNAT- Tamaulipas
Florencio Duza	SEMARNAT-Sonora
Emilio Cedrún	SEMARNAT-UCAI
Ramón Castrejón	SIEU Sonora
Lillian Conroe	State of Calif- CIWMB
Jorge Castillo	TCEQ
Abigail Ryder	USEPA
Matt Hale	USEPA
Rick Picardi	USEPA
Norma Duran	USEPA R6
Gina Weber	USEPA R6
Carlos A. Rincon	USEPA R6
David Jones	USEPA R9
Emily Pimentel	USEPA R9
John Rothman	USEPA R9